



CITY OF HOUSTON

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBER PETER BROWN

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HOUSTON CITY COUNCIL MEMBER PROPOSES SOLUTION TO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

HOUSTON, TEXAS - September 30, 2008 - Houston City Council Member Peter Brown (At Large, Position 1) proposes that a Task Force be created immediately to determine a cost-effective way to ensure reliable electricity for Houstonians.

Houston's wooden poles, overhead wires and transformers are severely outdated. Adding to the problem, many of these poles, wires and transformers are located in drainage ditches or dangerously close to large trees, curbs and buildings.

"It is neither practical nor cost effective to operate a 21st century modern city on an electrical system designed in the 19th century," says Council Member Brown. "We absolutely must better protect our homeowners and businesses from massive power outages due to hurricanes."

The Council Member says, "We need to modernize our electrical system, including burying electrical lines on major streets. About half of the new electrical lines constructed in the U.S. over the past 20 years have been placed underground, primarily for economic, public safety and aesthetic reasons. It's called a 'smart electrical grid.'"

Establishing a Task Force, made up of elected officials, business and community leaders, would be the logical first step to updating Houston's electrical system.

Brown says a Task Force should address the following:

- 1) Improve coordination between CenterPoint Energy, the City of Houston and Harris County. An electricity recovery plan should be clearly outlined in the Emergency Management and Recovery Action Plan.
- 2) Require underground lines in all new major street construction and reconstruction in new subdivisions.
- 3) Secure feeder and distribution lines, essential to key businesses, industries, institutions, and residential areas, either underground or in engineered rear easements.
- 4) Address the issue of high electrical rates in Houston, among the highest in the nation. Recommendations should be made to the PUC.

For more information, contact Maverick Welsh in the Office of Houston City Council Member Peter Brown at 832-393-3014.

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Peter Brown is a third-generation Houstonian, a nationally recognized architect and urban planner, serving his second term in At-Large Position 1 on Houston City Council. He welcomes your comments at atlarge1@cityofhouston.net.